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Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

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March 20, 2003

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The Honorable Michael Powell
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

APR 16 2003

Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary

Dear Chairman Powell:

As Hispanic Members of Congress, we are the elected representatives of over 11 million Latinos. At this time of active public debate concerning media consolidation and as the FCC completes its review of broadcast ownership rules, we write regarding two issues of particular concern to the Hispanic community – the consolidation of Spanish-language media; and the lack of Hispanic ownership and management of media.

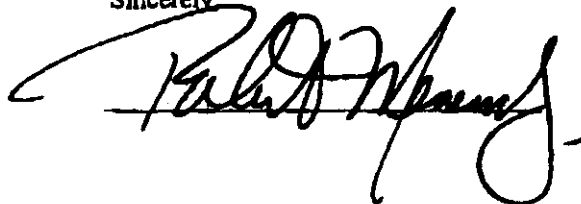
Hispanics account for almost 14% of the U.S. population and are the nation's largest minority group. In 20 years, Hispanics are expected to constitute 1 out of every 4 Americans. Over 35 million Latinos rely predominantly or exclusively on Spanish-language media for their news and entertainment – as the Spanish-language media is unequivocally a distinct and separate market. For that reason, we are concerned about the impact of consolidation on our constituents and the fact that Hispanic ownership and management of U.S. media has virtually vanished in recent years.

The Commission should re-consider a previous decision and state clear rules recognizing the difference and distinctness between the Spanish-language and English-language media markets. Because the current lack of specific rules on whether these are different markets has created challenges for anti-trust policy enforcers, we urge the Commission to establish a clear definition of the separation between Spanish-language and English-language media markets.

Consumer groups, unions, and other advocacy groups are urging the Commission to conduct hearings across the country. If the Commission further relaxes broadcast ownership rules, there might be fewer independent voices, less diversity of opinion and fewer news sources on the airwaves. We feel that it is important to bring these facts to your attention as the Commission considers issues impacting our constituents.

We hope the Commission shares our goals of preventing the decrease of Hispanic ownership of media, creating more localism and community oriented programming and providing for more Hispanic voices in the Hispanic media. We look forward to a detailed briefing by the Commission prior to making any final decisions on these important issues impacting the Hispanic community.

Sincerely,



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